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BRITISH CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING TEXAS

XV

EDITED BY EPHRAIM DOUGLASS ADAMS

KENNEDY TO ABERDEEN¹

No. 16.

Her Majesty's Consulate.
Galveston, July 8th. 1844.

My Lord,

I have the honor to transmit herewith a Memorial addressed to Your Lordship by British Subjects resident in Texas, having reference to the Measures in agitation for Annexing Texas to the United States.

A considerable proportion of the Memorialists are known to me as persons respectable by position and character. They assign as a reason for the comparatively small number of Signatures, that it was deemed inexpedient, placed as the British residents are amidst a preponderating population from the United States, to hold public Meetings, or to make any open demonstration for the purpose of eliciting the opinions of their fellow-Countrymen

William Kennedy.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

RUTHVEN AND OTHERS TO ABERDEEN²

[Enclosure]

To the Right Honble. The Earl of Aberdeen Her Britannick Majesty's principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Memorial of the undersigned British residents of the Towns of Galveston and Houston in the Republic of Texas Humbly Sheweth:

That your Memorialists, the greater part of them are engaged in Commercial pursuits, selected Texas as a field for their industry and enterprize, under the belief that it would remain an Independent State, in which Capacity it has been formally recognized by Her Majesty's Govt. and the Governments of France, The United States and Holland.

¹F. O., Texas, Vol. 10.

²F. O., Texas, Vol. 10.

That regarding Texas as Politically Independent and looking forward to a pacification between her and Mexico, as not being remote, Your Memorialists, who in Common with the rest of the population have suffered from the unsettled Condition of Public Affairs are perfectly satisfied to remain in the Country Employed in their several pursuits, Not doubting that the future would in the ordinary Course of events bring them a fair return for Capital and Labour.

That, after having been led to entertain hopes of an adjustment between Mexico and Texas being speedily effected, and in a great measure through the friendly Mediation of Her Majesty's Govt acting in accordance with other Powers by whom the Independence of Texas has been recognized, Your Memorialists have learned with Surprise and regret that proceedings have been, and are now in active progress by persons Clothed with Authority for effecting the Annexation of Texas to the United States.

That, Your Memorialists while they cannot but view the projected measure of Annexation as wholly inconsistent with the treaty obligations to which Gt Britain and the Republic of Texas are mutually covenanting and assenting parties, necessarily Contemplate in it the virtual violation of an understood Compact with themselves, as residents in the Country, proposing as the Measure does, to substitute our Govt. for another, and to introduce principles of Commercial legislation at variance with their Mercantile Interests, and as they believe, with the interests of England and all other Manufacturing Countries of Europe.

That being likewise impressed with the Conviction, that the incorporation of Texas with the Federal Union would ultimately give to the United States the power to establish a Monopoly of North American Commerce, and transfer to them a complete ascendancy in the Affairs of this Continent.—Your Memorialists humbly hope that Her Majesty's Govt will adopt such Measures as they, in their Wisdom may deem most expedient to bring about an early and honourable Settlement of the difficulties existing between Mexico and Texas and to guard against the accomplishments of any project inconsistent with the Political Independence of the Republic and the treaty Stipulations existing between her and Gt. Britain.

A. S. Ruthven	R. B. Hannay
Thos. V. Mortimer	Wm. M. Hudson
Jno. Dickinson	Angus McKenzie
Wm. Thomson	James Denny
James Grant	Henry Bryant
A. P. Thompson	A. Waddington
Wm. Wood	G. B. Scott
John Newland	John Scott
James Smith	Wm. C. Byrne
D. H. McDonald	Saml. Hyatt
W. N. Lyon	David R. Robertson
H. M. Gannell	Charles Daniel
William Purviss	Wm. J. Wright
John Collins, a resident of The County of Houston.	Thos. Cooper
W. G. Dyer	William Bollant
Robertin Hannay	Henry Stephenson
	J. H. Grieve

[Endorsed] In Mr Consul Kennedy's Despatch, dated 8th July.
1844. (No. 16.)

KENNEDY TO ABERDEEN³

Private.

Her Majesty's Consulate
Galveston July 8th. 1844.

My Lord,

In a letter marked "Private" which I had the honor to address to Your Lordship on the 18th Ultimo, I observed, that "Among a Republican democracy, political secrecy is next to impossible."—A (printed) correspondence herewith enclosed,⁴ between Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires and the Secretary of State of Texas, affords evidence that this observation is not ill founded. The correspondence was published in the Texan Newspapers within about two Months from the date of the first of communications which it includes.

The rejection of the Treaty of Annexation, by the Senate of the United States, has disappointed the expectations of many in this country, and has from some elicited signs of irritation. A

³F. O., Texas, Vol. 10.

⁴A cutting from *The Galveston Civilian*, June 8, 1844.

Galveston paper. (the *Civilian*), of Saturday last remarks—"We have not yet had time to see what effect the rejection of the Treaty and other Measures for the Annexation of Texas by the United States Congress, will have upon the minds of the friends of the Measure, in this Country generally, but, in Galveston, as far as we have heard them express themselves, the prevailing opinion seems to be that the question has been closed forever, and that for Texas to entertain it further would be a degradation not to be endured."—As I mentioned in my letter of the 6th May to Captain Elliot (of which I transmitted a Copy to Your Lordship) "the European residents form a considerable proportion of the inhabitants of this place."

A well informed Correspondent writes to me from New Orleans on the 29th. Ultimo.—"The Subject of Annexation will be taken up again soon, and agitated with redoubled vigour, and not without probability of success; provided Texas cannot, in the meantime, be induced to withdraw her consent." There are Americans, of some influence, at present, on a visit to Galveston, who, while they declare themselves warm supporters of Mr Clay's pretensions to the Presidency, speak of the Annexation of Texas to the United States as an arrangement all but certain. One of these persons, an extensive Merchant of New Orleans, is about to establish a Sugar plantation in this Country, and to remove thither Slaves employed by him on a plantation in Louisiana, on the presumption that Annexation will speedily take place.

I enclose an extract from the Government Journal⁵ published at Washington on the Brazos, announcing the arrival there of Officers bearing communications from General Taylor, now in Command of the American troops on the Texan frontier. I also enclose, and place in juxta-position with the preceding, a published letter⁶ from the Legation of the United States in Mexico. The Galveston paper, in which this letter appears, states that General Murphy has promptly communicated this information to his Government; and also that "he has strongly represented to his Government the absolute necessity of checking this hostile Movement of Mexico, evidently made with a view of putting an end to all hope of Annexation, and to take vengeance on Texas for favouring

⁵A cutting from *The National Vindicator*, June 29, 1844.

⁶A cutting from *The Galveston News*, July 6, 1844.

any Negotiation on that subject with the United States." In addition to these indications, I notice that the Texan Administration Journal at Washington intimates—that the late Indian inroads were stimulated and aided by the Mexican Authorities on the Rio Grande. From all the Movements, it would not be unreasonable to infer, that a *case of armed intervention was in progress*.

The departure of General Murphy, Chargé d’Affaires of the United States, will, it is announced, take place in a few days, his successor having been appointed.—According to the information derived from the private Secretary of the French Chargé d’Affaires, M. de Saligny, that gentleman is to arrive at Galveston by the next Steamer from New Orleans.

The United States Brig of War “Somers” arrived off Galveston from Vera Cruz, on the evening of the 30th Ultimo, and sailed, it was said for Pensacola, on the 2d Instant—

The Indians have been defeated on the frontier, and the borders are undisturbed at present.—A successor to General Houston in the Presidency of Texas is to be chosen in September, and there are two Candidates in the field.—General Burleson, celebrated as a leader against the Indians, and Mr Anson Jones, who is now in Office as Secretary of State. As yet, the electioneering Campaign proceeds but languidly,—the question of Annexation being paramount in the Minds of the people.

William Kennedy.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

P. S. Persons supposed to be in the confidence of the Texan Government say,—that propositions have been made offering to secure the independence of this Country within Sixty days, provided Mexico be guaranteed against “Annexation,” and the Ports of Texas opened to free trade with Great Britain and France.

The same persons also say that General Henderson, the special Envoy from Texas to the United States, has written to Counsel the people of this Country against taking any precipitate step, as the prospect of accomplishing the Measure of Annexation is still favourable.

W. K.

ELLIOT TO ABERDEEN⁷*Private.*White Sulphur Springs
Virginia July 10th. 1844.

My Lord,

In a kind private letter from Mr Clay to me, dated on the 29th Ultimo, reproaching me for not paying him a visit on my way to these Mountains, he observes "My predictions as to the fate of the Texas treaty before the Senate were fully verified, the decision of that body will vindicate the good faith and honor of the U. States"

"The Author of the Negotiations has totally failed in the object which unquestionably moved him to open it" (Mr. Clay means here the disunion of the Whig party and he goes on to say) "It could not secure him even the nomination of the Democratic Convention, nor with the treaty exert any material influence on the existing canvass. I consider the success of the Whig cause is beyond all doubt."

It has occurred to me that Your Lordship would be pleased to hear these views, and I hope, therefore, to be excused for this intrusion. Your Lordship will have observed from my despatches that I did not consider it suitable to avail myself of the permission to return to Europe in the condition of affairs which had come about, by the time that it reached me;⁸ neither have I liked to do so till replies to the intelligence of the failure of the treaty shall have reached me, either directly, or through Mr. Pakenham. In the mean time I am glad to find that Mr. Pakenham agrees with me in thinking there is no need for my return to Texas till we shall be further instructed from England.

Your Lordship is aware that I am ready for any service that may be charged to me.

Charles Elliot.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

⁷P. O., Texas, Vol. 9.

⁸Elliot, though recuperating in Virginia, presumably knew by this time (through Pakenham) of the determination to which Aberdeen had come in May, 1844, of preventing the Annexation of Texas. The "Murphy Memorandum," an outline of a plan by which England, France, and Mexico were to act in concert in prohibiting annexation had been drawn up by Aberdeen and the Mexican minister, Murphy, in London, on May 29, 1844. For text of the memorandum, see Adams, *British Interests and Activities in Texas*, 168-169. For paraphrased translation, see Smith, *The Annexation of Texas*, 389.

KENNEDY TO ABERDEEN⁹

Private.

Her Majesty's Consulate
Galveston July 29th. 1844.

My Lord,

In reference to a portion of my letter of the 18th Instant, marked "Private," and addressed to Your Lordship, I beg to communicate the following information, recently received from Mr Redmond, an English trader, resident at Corpus Christi.

It has been stated by Mr Redmond, that, in consequence of the unusually formidable character of the late Indian inroads, the residents of Corpus Christi had made urgent application for protection to the Government. The requisite assistance was promised, to enable them to repel any merely Indian incursion, and it was further intimated, by President Houston, to the party deputed to represent their situation, that if they had reason to construe the attempts upon Corpus Christi into a design originating in hostile dispositions on the side of Mexico, arrangements should be made for calling in a protective force from the United States.—Such are the leading points of the Statement furnished by Mr Redmond, who, notwithstanding his anxiety respecting the fate of his property at Corpus Christi, is too much opposed to "Annexation" to desire the presence of American troops within the limits of this Republic.

Captain Galan,¹⁰ a bearer of despatches from the Government of Mexico to the Government of Texas, arrived at Corpus Christi on the 5th Inst. He is still in this Country, the absence of President Houston in Eastern Texas having delayed his return to Matamoros.—I have been informed that the Communications of which he has been the bearer contain a formal Notice of the termination of the Armistice between Mexico and Texas.

The French Brig of War "Griffon," arrived off Galveston on the 17th Instant, some of her officers visited the town.—On the 21st Instant, the Brig went to sea again. The Chargé d'Affaires of France is still absent.

The United States War Schooner "Flirt," sailed from Galveston

⁹F. O., Texas, Vol. 10.

¹⁰Mentioned in July, 1843, as a bearer of communications from General Woll to President Houston. Garrison, *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Republic of Texas*, III, 1114, in *Am. Hist. Assoc. Report*, 1908, II.

on the 22d Instant. The officer in Command alleged that he had delayed her departure for the purpose of ascertaining the object of the "Griffon's" visit, and watching her movements.

General Murphy, late Chargé d'Affaires from the United States died in Galveston on the night of the 12th Instant, and was buried on the 13th. In compliance with the wishes of the provisional representative of the United States Government in this Republic. I attended the funeral as a pall-bearer. This is the third American Minister who has died in Texas within the last four years.

The project of placing a Consular Officer of the United States at Corpus Christi (mentioned in my "Private" letter to Your Lordship of June 11th) was favoured by General Murphy, and may, perhaps, with his decease, for the present pass away.

On Friday, the 26th Instant, General T. A. Howard, the newly-appointed Chargé d'Affaires from the United States to Texas, arrived here from New Orleans, by the Texan, Merchant brig "Rover."—I called upon General Howard, and was told that, apprehensive of his health, he had left the town, and had proceeded some Miles down the Island, where he intended to remain for a short time,—until, it is probable, the sickness now prevailing had abated.

The sickness prevalent has been pronounced Yellow Fever by Medical authority. It was—there is no room to doubt—brought to Galveston from Vera Cruz, by the United States War Steamer "Poinsett," when she entered this Harbour on the 7th of June, as reported in my "private" letter to Your Lordship of the 11th of that Month. Part of her crew were attacked by the disease at Vera Cruz, and some of them still suffering under it, were landed here—there being, as yet, no Quarantine Regulations for this Port. The result has been disastrous—There have been many deaths, and I have heard a Medical estimate that one out of every ten of the whole population has been stricken by fever. The United States Consul for Galveston,—who—some fourteen days ago attended with me the funeral of the late American Minister, expired at 6 o'clock on yesterday morning, and in the evening of the same day I followed his remains to the grave.

There are three British Merchant Vessels in Harbour, and sickness has pressed severely on their crews. The Master of one, and the carpenter of another have died. Medical attendance is very

expensive, and Nurses for the sick are difficult to be procured. For about twelve day's Medical attendance, Medicine, etc., during my illness, in the early part of the year, I had to pay above Sixty five pounds Sterling.—It might be well if Consuls, under such circumstances, were authorized to Contract for attendance on British ships.

With the exception of a female servant, all in my house have hitherto escaped the existing fever. Anxious, as I am, to leave no arrear in my official books, to lay a good foundation for the future conduct of the business of this Consulate, and to note the progress of events, at this seemingly critical period, I have, for the present, relinquished the idea of fixing any specific time for recruiting my strength at a distance from my post. I propose, therefore, to continue this correspondence, until otherwise directed, during the absence of Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires.

The Steamers that ply annually between Galveston and New Orleans, have withdrawn from the station, for the Season of Southern-Sultriness and inactivity. I cannot in consequence, calculate on possessing the means of transmitting intelligence from this place with equal regularity as heretofore.

William Kennedy.

The Earl of Aberdeen, K. T.

P. S. General Howard, the recently arrived Minister from the United States, has sent me a card, in return to mine by the Hanseatic Consul at this Port,—with expressions of regret, at his inability to return my call, in consequence of being obliged to leave Galveston by Steam-boat today for Houston, on his way to the seat of Government.

W. K.